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The Scripts of *Citizen Kane*

Robert L. Carringer

The best-known controversy in film criticism of recent years has been over the authorship of the *Citizen Kane* script. Pauline Kael first raised the issue in a flamboyant piece in *The New Yorker* in 1971. Contrary to what Orson Welles would like us to believe, Kael charged, the script for the film was actually not his work but almost wholly the work of an all-but-forgotten figure, one of Hollywood's veteran screenwriters, Herman J. Mankiewicz.

Welles probably made suggestions in his early conversations with Mankiewicz, and since he received copies of the work weekly while it was in progress . . . may have given advice by phone or letter. Later, he almost certainly made suggestions for cuts that helped Mankiewicz hammer the script into tighter form, and he is known to have made a few changes on the set. But Mrs. Alexander, who took the dictation from Mankiewicz, from the first paragraph to the last, and then, when the first draft was completed and they all went back to Los Angeles, did the secretarial work at Mankiewicz's house on the rewriting and the cuts, and who then handled the script at the studio until after the film was shot, says that Welles didn't write (or dictate) one line of the shooting script of *Citizen Kane*.

The principal evidence was an early draft of the script which Kael was able to show had been written mostly by Mankiewicz. She fleshed the case out with testimonies from various Mankiewicz relatives, professional

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associates, and friends, all purporting to show how much the script was really his. The evidence was all one-sided and the case was wholly circumstantial, but nevertheless "Raising Kane" presented an authentic critical problem that could neither be dismissed nor ignored. Welles has always worked by being involved in several things at once. Especially in the frantic early years of the Mercury Theatre, it was often necessary for others to take over some of the time-consuming preparatory chores like scripting. Although the Mercury radio scripts were often written by others as a matter of course, their authorship was frequently attributed to Welles. Why would it be unusual for the same thing to happen on a Mercury Theatre film? Without any hard and fast evidence to prove otherwise, even a circumstantial case for Mankiewicz's authorship of the *Citizen Kane* script was enough to raise lingering suspicions, if not outright doubts.¹

Fortunately, enough evidence to settle the matter has survived. A virtually complete set of script records for *Citizen Kane* has been preserved in the archives of RKO General Pictures in Hollywood, and these provide almost a day-to-day record of the history of the scripting. Once this record is reconstructed and all the available pieces of evidence are matched to it, a reasonably clear picture emerges of who was responsible for what in the final script. The full evidence reveals that Welles' contribution to the *Citizen Kane* script was not only substantial but definitive.

1. Pauline Kael, "Raising Kane," *The New Yorker*, 20 and 27 February, 1971, rpt. in *The Citizen Kane Book* (Boston, 1971), p. 38. John Houseman gives a detailed account of the way the Mercury Theatre radio shows were prepared in "The Men from Mars," *Harper's Magazine*, December 1948, pp. 74–82. Concerning the "War of the Worlds" broadcast, he claims that Welles "had virtually nothing to do with the writing of the script." "Raising Kane" set off a storm of protest. Most of the replies were either invocations of then-fashionable "auteur" doctrines or testimonies to Welles' prodigious skills by those who knew or had worked with him. Welles himself wrote a brief letter of reply to the editor of the *London Times* ("The creation of *Citizen Kane*," 17 November 1971, p. 17). The more or less official reply was made in his behalf by critic-director Peter Bogdanovich. Bogdanovich's case was based mainly on testimony by Welles partisans and Welles himself; judged strictly on the nature of Bogdanovich's evidence his argument was not much stronger than Kael's ("The Kane Mutiny," *Esquire*, October 1972, pp. 99–105, 180–90). Richard Meryman's *Mank: The Wit, World, and Life of Herman Mankiewicz* (New York, 1978) deals at length with the authorship controversy but sheds no new light on it.

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1

There are seven complete drafts of the *Citizen Kane* script in the RKO files.² The first is dated 16 April 1940; the latest set of revisions in the final draft is dated 19 July. The first three might be more accurately termed “gatherings” than drafts. Once the project was under way, the various production departments—budgeting, art, casting, research, and so on—had to have a temporary first draft in order to start preliminary preparations as soon as possible. Then a temporary second draft would have to be available so that the departments could make necessary reconsiderations and changes. Since, at these early stages, the script would be gathered for production purposes, the gatherings do not necessarily indicate that a new creative plateau had been reached in the evolution of the story. Meanwhile, as a script gathering was being typed, revisions were being made daily and sent on to the stenographic department. The revision pages were then individually assigned a new date (usually the date of typing) and inserted into a script carrying an earlier master date. (One early script gathering has almost 200 such pages.) As the start of shooting neared, a mimeographed script, called “Final,” was prepared for wide distribution to members of the cast and production staff. In the case of *Citizen Kane*, “Final” was the fourth draft, and subsequent drafts

2. There are also several sets of revision pages for individual sequences done between drafts, plus copies of special scripts with scene and set designation but no dialogue, prepared from the main drafts for budgeting, art work, and other purposes. I thank Al Korn, vice president of RKO General Pictures, for making access to these files possible, and John Munro-Hall, West Coast manager of RKO, for his active support and assistance. I also thank Vernon Harbin, an administrative employee of RKO for forty-five years, for elaborate behind-the-scenes explanations of the studio's operations and practices during the *Citizen Kane* period, and Amalia Kent, veteran Hollywood script supervisor, not only for her recollections of her work supervising the *Citizen Kane* and other Welles scripts, but also for much valuable technical information on scripting procedures at RKO in the forties. *Citizen Kane* ©1941 RKO Radio Pictures.

There are several *Citizen Kane* script items in the archives of the Mercury Theatre which are not in the RKO files; I have identified these in footnotes at the appropriate places. I have been able to see these materials only briefly in a general inspection of the Mercury archives, but their former custodian, Richard Wilson, a long-standing Welles associate, a production assistant on *Citizen Kane*, and himself a specialist on the history of the script, has kindly read this essay, told me he thinks it an accurate account of the script's history, and assures me there is nothing in the Mercury files to controvert its main argument and its essential points. (The Mercury Theatre archives have recently been sold to Lilly Library at Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind., but are not yet available for use.) I thank Wilson for this assistance and also for valuable information he provided me about Welles, the Mercury Theatre, and *Citizen Kane*. I have also examined miscellaneous *Citizen Kane* script materials in the Film Study Center, Museum of Modern Art; Theatre Arts Library, UCLA; and Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research. I am also grateful to John Houseman and Pauline Kael, who have both responded immediately and forthrightly to my various inquiries, and to Sara Mankiewicz for the opportunity to examine her husband's copies of the *Citizen Kane* script.

(all newly mimeographed) were called "Revised Final," "Second Revised Final," and "Third Revised Final." The mimeographed scripts also have inserted individually dated revision pages, usually on blue paper.

The first two drafts of the *Citizen Kane* script were written by Herman Mankiewicz and John Houseman in seclusion in the desert at Victorville, California, during March, April, and May 1940. Officially, Houseman was there as editor. But part of his job was to ride herd on Mankiewicz, whose drinking habits were legendary and whose screenwriting credentials unfortunately did not include a reputation for seeing things through. Detailed accounts of the Victorville interlude have been given by Houseman in his autobiography and by Kael in "Raising Kane." There was constant interchange between Victorville and Hollywood, with Houseman going in to confer on the script and Welles sending up emissaries (and going up on occasion himself) and regularly receiving copies of the work in progress. Welles in turn was working over the draft pages with the assistance of his own secretary, Katherine Tropper, and handing the revised screenplay copy in its rough state over to Amalia Kent, a script supervisor at RKO noted for her skills at breaking this kind of material down into script continuity form, who was readying it for the stenographic and various production departments.³

First draft. The first draft of the script with a complete beginning, middle, and end is dated 16 April 1940 and titled *American*.⁴ It is over 250 pages (the final shooting script was only 156 pages), and even at that length there are still huge gaps in the continuity to be filled in. Though *American* is only a pale version of what is to come, it must nevertheless be examined in careful detail. The material at this state is almost wholly the work of the writer and his editor. When Welles himself becomes heavily

3. John Houseman, *Run-Through: A Memoir* (New York, 1972), pp. 445–61. "Raising Kane," pp. 29–39. Amalia Kent had impressed Welles with her work on the problematic first-person script for his unproduced *Heart of Darkness* film, and she worked directly with him in various script supervision capacities on other of his RKO projects, including *The Magnificent Ambersons* and the unproduced *Smiler with the Knife*. She also continued as the script supervisor throughout the shooting of *Citizen Kane* and prepared the cutting reports for the film's editor, Robert Wise. Kael gives the impression that Rita Alexander, Herman Mankiewicz's private secretary, was performing all these specialized studio functions herself.

4. I have seen two script fragments which predate *American*. One, in the Mercury Theatre files, is a ninety-two-page typescript original, undated, containing early versions of the opening, the newsreel, the projection room sequence, and the Thatcher narration and story. It has handwritten corrections, probably by John Houseman; one of these crosses out the original surname, Charles Foster Rogers, and writes in *Craig*. The other, in the RKO files, is a seven-page typescript carbon of the newsreel sequence, with the date 18 April entered separately in typescript original. It contains various material that did not survive in *American*, for instance, a direction for an inserted shot of a tattered deed left by the defaulting boarder. In it the Kanes are the *Craigs* and Bernstein is *Annenberg*.

involved in the writing, it will become apparent almost at once how greatly his ideas on how to deal with the material differ from theirs. One measure of the success of the film is the degree to which it is divested of the conceptions of the early drafts of the script.

American opens in the manner of the German expressionists, with directions for the camera to move through an iron gate and, after a series of dissolve-views of the dilapidated grounds of Kane's estate (called "The Alhambra" at this point), to enter the front door, proceed across the great hall, ascend the staircase, and pass down a long gallery filled with art objects, arriving at last at Kane's bedroom, where a nurse is just entering with a hospital table. From inside we are to hear a voice say, faintly, "Rosebud." We are to see the falling snowflakes, then the glass globe held by the figure on the bed. He is to say "Rosebud" three more times. The early segments of action—a newsreel biography, the discussion in the projection room, visits to Susan Alexander Kane at the nightclub and to the Thatcher Memorial Library, and a flashback to Kane's childhood in Colorado—appear in the order and with the overall logic they will eventually have.

The first major difference from the final script appears after the Colorado sequence. In *American* the Thatcher manuscript, instead of going immediately to the newspaper years, continues with an account of the financier's visit to Kane in Rome on his twenty-fifth birthday. Kane is installed in the oldest, most expensive Renaissance palace in Rome. A party is in progress when Thatcher arrives. The guests are a thoroughly disreputable lot—"pimps, Lesbians, dissipated Army officers, homosexuals, nymphomaniacs and international society tramps." That evening Thatcher and Kane meet alone to discuss the future management of Kane's interest. Thatcher presents Kane with a large bound book detailing his holdings. As Kane thumbs through it he seems to stumble accidentally on one item, the New York *Enquirer*, a faltering newspaper acquired some years before in a foreclosure proceeding. Kane says he thinks it "might be fun to run a newspaper" and forbids Thatcher to dispose of the *Enquirer*. Thatcher's story continues with his encounter with Kane in the *Enquirer* offices a few years later, written as it will appear in the film except that in the business of Cuba it is Leland (called Brad at this stage), not Wheeler, who, as the *Enquirer*'s correspondent on the scene, is instructed to keep on providing tropical colors and leave it to his editor to provide the war. Thatcher's narration concludes with an encounter in the board room of Thatcher and Company many years later, when it is revealed to the old man and his son (and heir apparent in the business) that Kane's papers are about to expose certain questionable bond flotation practices by the nation's leading investment bankers.

Bernstein's story begins by returning to Rome and telling the sequel to Kane's meeting with Thatcher. Bernstein reveals that he gave up his wholesale jewelry business to go in with Kane and how the two of them

plotted secretly to take over the *Enquirer* and made plans to do away with its “ladylike” and “sissified” content and to transform its deadly dull layout. (Duplicity was necessary, Kane thought, because Thatcher would have disposed of the *Enquirer* if he had got wind Kane was interested in it.) Kane’s first day at the *Enquirer* is presented substantially as it is in the film. The circulation-building phase, however, is very different. There are scenes showing Benton, editor of the *Chronicle*, reacting to his new rival—dismissing him as a young upstart, then becoming more and more nervous at his success, and finally offering to buy him out. Benton’s personal secretary, Reilly, appears in these scenes. Later he comes over to Kane with the rest of the *Chronicle* staff. Though he is eventually eliminated, he has a prominent role through several drafts of the script.

Bernstein also tells of a discussion at dinner one evening between himself, Kane, and Leland (now back from Cuba and installed as dramatic critic) about Thatcher’s efforts to ruin the *Enquirer* by bringing pressure on its advertisers. Kane predicted such efforts would cease almost at once. Next day when a crony of Thatcher’s on the traction trust pays a threatening call to Kane’s office, Kane produces incriminating letters Reilly has stolen for him and forces the man and his associates into leaving the *Enquirer* alone. Next in Bernstein’s story are two familiar incidents—a conversation in Kane’s office when Kane and Leland discuss Kane’s impending vacation in Europe on doctor’s advice and Kane’s return from Europe with a surprise announcement for the society editor. Back in the present, Thompson shows Bernstein a letter from attorneys representing Emily—now Mrs. Whitehall Standing—saying she regards her marriage to Kane as a distasteful episode in her life which she would prefer to forget and declining to be interviewed.

Next in *American* is the story of Kane’s life with Emily. It is organized as a discrete narrative segment, but there is no frame device or other explanation of its narrative status. Though the letter of disclaimer from her lawyers has eliminated Emily as one of the informants, at this stage she is clearly still being considered as a kind of undeclared narrative presence. First are shots of the White House wedding. Next is a scene in the Lincoln Room in which Emily’s father tells Kane the Nortons dislike his politics and crusading but are convinced nonetheless Emily chose wisely. Then come scenes of a honeymoon in the remote Wisconsin woods. Kane has had his yacht taken down and shipped there and re-assembled on a small lake. The happy couple is attended by an army of chefs and servants. Kane is finding it difficult to keep his promise of two weeks free of newspapers and other business. Suddenly, in an old piece of newspaper used for wrapping, an item catches his eye. He breaks the honeymoon short and rushes back to attempt to head off a lease of government oil reserves to an oil trust. Kane gains an audience with President Norton and they exchange heated remarks. When the president refuses to call off the lease, Kane begins a campaign against him in

his papers. A son, Howard, is born to the Kanes, but Kane's preoccupation with his work and his increasingly savage attacks on the president open a breach in the marriage. The president is seriously wounded in an assassination attempt; reportedly the assassin had an inflammatory *Enquirer* editorial in his pocket; angry crowds gather in front of the *Enquirer* building. Though the president recovers and the public outrage eventually dies down, Emily cannot forget; she will remain married to Kane to keep up appearances and avoid hurting his political ambitions, but she no longer loves him. At about the same time Leland starts to protest to Kane about a new policy being instituted in the dramatic section by Reilly, but Kane puts him off. Shortly after, Leland is transferred to the Chicago paper at his own request.

Kane becomes a candidate for governor on the Independent Voters' League ticket; though his opponent is Judge Grey, his real antagonist in the campaign is Boss Rogers, who saw to it that Kane was denied the regular party's nomination. Kane is thought to be a certain loser, but his antipolitics, antiparty themes appeal to the voters, and his campaign catches fire. There is a gigantic rally at Madison Square Garden on the eve of the campaign. After Kane gives his speech, he is handed an urgent message to "come to my place tonight—Susan." Kane loses by a slim margin. The *Enquirer* headline charging "FRAUD AT POLLS" is not merely a political stance, since it is generally believed the election was stolen from Kane. He demands a recount but relents when he senses it probably won't do any good. Emily, who has stuck by him to avoid damaging his chances in politics, leaves to file for a divorce and takes their son with her. Before she goes she tells Kane she has known about Susan Alexander for some time.

Leland's story comes next. In Leland's remarks to Thompson there is material later deleted—a long passage in which he describes his and Kane's days in school together and tells how he came to be associated with Kane on the *Enquirer*, and another passage in which, as he reflects over their long friendship, he wonders if Rosebud may somehow be connected with himself. His narration begins during the early days at the *Enquirer* and includes several scenes of him and Kane dining together at expensive restaurants and going to the theatre, usually in the company of cheap women. It continues with the celebration party, which had been introduced in Bernstein's narration; as dancing goes on in the background, Leland questions Bernstein about the loyalties of the new staff, as he does in the film. Next Leland is sent off to Cuba as the *Enquirer's* special correspondent at the front. He is shown in a quiet pastoral scene in Cuba while headlines and articles in the *Enquirer* carrying his byline tell of native uprisings, massacres, and other eyewitness atrocities taking place there. Leland returns from Cuba in a rage and protests this gross distortion of his reports. Kane accepts his resignation as war correspondent but uses his charm and the prospect of wine and women and

continued good times to get back into his good graces. One evening at the theatre Kane and Leland and their inevitable girls run into Kane Sr., “a dandy as ever was,” in the company of a “young tart”; later at Leland’s apartment when Kane Sr. introduces her as his new wife, Kane flies into a murderous rage and attacks the old man.

The Leland narration continues by filling in or expanding things already introduced: Leland and Bernstein talk about why Leland didn’t accompany Kane to Europe (because Leland’s a “stuffed-shirt,” a “New England schoolmarm,” and Kane was going to have fun); Leland and Emily look on as a proud father admires his three-week-old son; Kane skips dinner at home (the second time that week) to pursue his campaign in the *Enquirer* against the president; and Kane, Bernstein, and Leland huddle together at the office the evening of the assassination attempt as an angry mob mills outside. Now Reilly’s new policy—actually an outright promotional scheme—is revealed: in effect, theatrical producers are to be guaranteed favorable notices in exchange for advertising considerations. If Leland’s review of a particular show is too negative, a more favorable review by someone else will be substituted. The scheme apparently has Kane’s blessing. Leland is outraged and insists on being transferred to Chicago; Kane lets him go. An added note explains that despite his independent campaign posture Kane made a political deal to insure his election. When his opponents got wind of it, Kane scooped them and exposed himself in his own papers. The bad publicity cost him enough votes to make the race close and make it possible for his opponents to steal the election. Other inserts show Kane emerging with Susan from a justice of the peace and Leland trying unsuccessfully to compose a congratulatory telegram. The final portion of Leland’s account covers Susan’s debut. It includes background material that was to be eliminated: Leland meets the Kanes at the special train which transports them to Chicago; on this occasion tell-tale allusions are made to Susan’s fondness for jigsaw puzzles and Kane’s injunctions against further drinking. There is a celebration luncheon attended by the mayor and six governors. Leland passes out at his typewriter before he finishes his review. A box on the theatrical page of the Chicago *Enquirer* next day states that the review will be run a day late. Leland receives a \$25,000 severance check; he tears it up and returns it along with the “Declaration of Principles.” A messenger delivers the envelope to Kane in his stateroom on the train. Kane quietly disposes of it. Susan, absorbed in her jigsaw puzzles, never knows.

After Leland’s narration there is a sixty-page numbering gap. The missing portion would include Kane’s first years with Susan—their meeting, the development of their relationship, their marriage, and her singing career. In this draft Susan’s story does not begin until she and Kane have already retired to the Florida estate, which, after the numbering gap, is renamed Xanadu. Her first scene features Bernstein as a re-

luctant visitor always fidgeting about the work he left behind in New York. He confesses to Kane he also feels out of place because the other guests, mostly Susan's friends, are so much younger than Kane and he. Kane insists he stay over and appear in costume at a Wild West party the following evening. Susan goes off to the stables with a handsome young man, Jerry Martin, to see a new colt, and despite her mild protestations to Jerry that he has got her all wrong, it is clear something is in the offing between them. Susan brings a pitcher of cocktails to Bernstein in his room; she tosses down three drinks as she describes how empty the lives of the moneyed can be. At the Wild West party an obviously bored Susan dances in a slow, old-fashioned style with Kane while all the rest do lively modern dances. Susan and Jerry dance, then wander off together in search of drinks. When Kane decides to go for a swim at 1:00 A.M., he and Raymond come upon Susan and Jerry embracing in the bathhouse. Kane makes a remark to Raymond about a "rat that ought to be killed," and the next afternoon Raymond reveals that Jerry Martin has been found dead on the Xanadu grounds, apparently as a result of being thrown from his horse. Kane brings the news to Susan, still in bed with a hangover. She reads the truth in his eyes.

Next we see them a year later on their yacht. They have been on an extended around-the-world cruise; Susan pleads to be taken home. Next is a montage of puzzles, inserted to suggest her increasing frustration and boredom at Xanadu. The rest of her story from this point is substantially as in the film—the Everglades picnic, the argument between Susan and Kane in their tent, Susan's decision to leave, and the separation scene in Susan's room. Back in the present, Susan says she's sorry she couldn't help about Rosebud, but tells Thompson he ought to see Raymond because "he knows where the bodies are buried." Raymond haggles with Thompson over how much whatever information he gives is worth and then continues the story from Susan's departure (it was 1929). Kane put out a news item over the wire saying her leaving was "under the terms of a peaceful and friendly agreement," ordered a picture run as usual after dinner, and went to her room and took away the little glass globe.

Next is an account of how Kane lost his papers in 1935. For years Kane has stripped his newspapers of cash to finance his extravagant personal ventures. Now a massive loan is needed to keep the papers going. Thatcher Jr. makes control of the business management of the papers a condition of the loan. Kane, Bernstein, and Reilly are seen dining alone in silence at Xanadu.

A few years later Kane's son Howard is killed when he and some other members of a "half-baked, idiot fascist movement" try to seize an armory in Washington. Typically, Kane dictates a self-serving press release for his papers which begins, "Deprived of the father's guidance to which he was entitled. . . ." He attends the funeral and is seated next to

Emily and her new husband. Afterwards Raymond finds Kane apparently unconscious on the floor of the bathroom in his hotel. In the last shot of him he is being attended by a nurse on the grounds of Xanadu. Finally the screen is filled with newspaper headlines announcing his death. Raymond and Thompson take leave of one another.

Near the end *American* degenerates into buffoonery and farce. The scenes at Xanadu are written substantially as they will eventually appear down to Thompson's all-important summation of Kane. As he begins, a photographer rudely interrupts him, and he breaks off. Later as he and the others wait for a train to New York he starts in again and is again rudely interrupted and told to save it for later. There the matter is dropped. *American* ends with Rosebud going into the furnace, a reversal of the opening shots, and a final glimpse of Kane's monogram on the immense iron gate.

2

Though Welles used to play down the connection, it is by now almost universal knowledge that William Randolph Hearst was the general model for Charles Foster Kane. Some of Hearst's memorable lines, his scandalmongering, his ideological inconsistencies, the awkwardness of his May-December romance with Marion Davies—all these things in the film based on Hearst were more or less commonly known at the time. What is not generally known is just how strong a presence Hearst was in the formative stages of the scripting. That presence in *American* is overwhelming; most of this installment of the script is quite literally a reworking of specific incidents and details from Hearst's life. Some of it was too scandalous to have appeared in respectable print, such as an alleged liaison of Marion Davies' which resulted in a death aboard Hearst's yacht under mysterious circumstances, almost certainly the inspiration for the Jerry Martin affair.⁵ But most of it had been published previously in newspaper and magazine articles and in books. Mankiewicz had been a newspaper man himself and knew nearly every story about Hearst by heart. But he was also almost certainly drawing on published sources as well. Two works in particular, both published just a few years before the writing of *American*, seem to have been special sources for the information in *American* about Hearst: a florid and highly romanticized "authorized" biography by Mrs. Fremont Older, wife of a Hearst editor, and a biography in the "muckraking" tradition by Ferdinand Lundberg. Mrs. Older struggles valiantly to put all of Hearst's activities, even the seam-

5. See Kenneth Anger, *Hollywood Babylon* (1965; San Francisco, 1975), pp. 96–104. Anger also reports an instance of a Hearst trait shown in *American*: his releasing phony news items to cover up personal scandals.

iest, in the most favorable light; Lundberg does just the opposite. Read one after the other, these two books can leave an impression of Hearst that is very much like the position the film finally arrives at about Kane: that he is a figure of contradiction and paradox whose true motives and real self continually elude even his most persistent interpreters.⁶

The title *American* may have been inspired (as Pauline Kael suggests) by Hearst's general fondness for attaching that label to his enterprises. But it was also used in a similar way in the title of Mrs. Older's book. The newsreel narration sometimes sounds suspiciously like Mrs. Older's rhetorical flights, such as her description of the aging publisher in his years of decline at San Simeon:

Camp Hill has become the Casa Grande on the Enchanted Hill of San Simeon. Here in remote grandeur, forty-three miles from a town of any size, and two hundred miles from a large city, William Randolph Hearst, this invisible Charlemagne of the mountains, seems to his twenty-million readers almost like a myth. Few have seen him, save in the news-reel.

In 1919, Hearst gave to San Simeon a new meaning. The forty-five-thousand acres inherited from his father became the nucleus of what has grown to be an imperial domain. Here, with the clarity of isolation, the publisher on the crest of his mountain range surveys his fifty miles of coast line on the Pacific, and edits forty-one newspapers and magazines. [P. 528]

The events dealt with in the newsreel could be an outline for a public biography of Hearst. The first detail used to illustrate Kane's impact on his times is his involvement in mercy efforts after the San Francisco earthquake. *American* calls for shots of "special trains with large streamers: 'Kane Relief Organization.'" The model is Hearst's publicity-orchestrated sponsorship of relief efforts after the famous earthquake of April 1906. Oil scandals and women's suffrage, the first two issues enumerated to illustrate Kane's association with controversial public af-

6. Mrs. Fremont Older, *William Randolph Hearst, American* (New York, 1936); Ferdinand Lundberg, *Imperial Hearst* (1936; New York, 1937); all further citations to these two books will appear in the text. In 1947 Lundberg brought suit against the makers of *Citizen Kane* for copyright infringement. Mankiewicz freely admitted on the stand he had read both books and said he regarded them both as biased: "Mrs. Older's book falls into the class of what I would call, if Mr. Hearst were running for office, a campaign life; and Mr. Lundberg's book is the counterpart to it, the book designed to show that the opposition candidate never helped an old woman across the street or gave a horse a piece of sugar" (testimony [30 November 1950], p. 66). As to the charge of infringement, he insisted he had known *first hand* things about Hearst that had appeared in print *only* in *Imperial Hearst*. The trial ended in a hung jury and RKO settled out of court. The records of Lundberg v. Welles et al. (hereafter cited as Lundberg case) are at the Federal Records Center in Bayonne, New Jersey.

fairs, were both areas of long-standing and highly visible involvement by Hearst. Like Kane, Hearst was notorious for his flip-flopping of support on political issues and personages, from labor to fascism and from the Bolsheviks to FDR. Hearst, like Kane, also “Hastened his country’s entry into one war” and “bitterly . . . opposed our participation in another.” The comic touch in the newsreel where Kane is termed, successively, from separate quarters, a communist, a fascist, and an American is undoubtedly inspired by a passage in one of Hearst’s old campaign speeches reprinted by Mrs. Older:

I am attacked on one side by the organs of socialism as an enemy of radicalism, and on the other side by the organs of Wall Street as an enemy of conservatism. I am opposed by both extremes . . . but my program is not extreme, simply Americanism. . . . [Pp. 310–11]

Another humorous touch in the newsreel directly inspired by Hearst is Kane’s expulsion from “Nuremberg [*sic*] University” for placing a chamber pot on the school tower. Hearst had been expelled from Harvard after he sent a chamber pot to each faculty member with a photograph of the recipient inside (Lundberg, p. 20).

Numerous details in Kane’s newspaper career have precise counterparts in Hearst’s life. Like Kane, Hearst had a virtual financial empire at his disposal, out of which he selected one insignificant item, an anemic and unprosperous newspaper, the San Francisco *Examiner*. (Kane’s paper at this stage is the *Enquirer*, which is closer to Hearst’s paper than the spelling—*Inquirer*—eventually used.) Thatcher acquired the paper in a foreclosure proceeding and was offered \$100,000 for it, precisely the amount of the bad debt through which Hearst’s father acquired the *Examiner* in 1880 (Lundberg, p. 20). Kane tells Thatcher he thinks it “might be fun to run a newspaper”; Mrs. Older’s husband, a Hearst editor, recalls that at the time Hearst took over the *Examiner* he was thought of as “the son of a millionaire who thought it might be good to ‘take a fling’ at journalism” (p. vii).

The original models for Kane’s two closest associates on the paper, Bernstein and Leland, are Hearst men—S. S. Carvalho, his shrewd, singleminded, intensely loyal Jewish business manager, and Eugene Lent, his boyhood chum in San Francisco, traveling companion in Europe, Harvard classmate and associate on the Harvard *Lampoon*, and one of his first employees on the *Examiner*. Virtually all the steps Kane takes when he assumes control of the *Enquirer* are based directly on or inspired by Hearst’s behavior in the early days at the San Francisco *Examiner* and later when he took over the New York *Journal*. Hearst threw himself into his work and practically lived in the editorial offices of

his papers in those days; Mrs. Older reports that he seldom left the *Journal* offices in New York until three or four in the morning. One of his first tasks was to redesign completely the appearance of the paper. Hearst was legendary for issuing orders for the paper to be made over after the pages were locked up or even after it was on the presses. "The paper must be right, nothing else matters," a resisting editor is said to have been told on one such occasion (Older, p. 139; also see p. 151). Hearst actually dropped the price of the paper as a circulation ploy (as Kane is shown contemplating), throwing fear and panic into the ranks of enemy papers. Hearst pursued an aggressive and virtually intimidating policy of soliciting advertising, as Kane does in *American*. Hearst also hounded his news sources mercilessly, as Kane does in the episode on Mrs. Silverstone of Brooklyn.

The circulation building sequences of *American* are based largely on Hearst's rivalries with other publishers in his early newspaper days. Lundberg points out that by 1889 the *Examiner* had reached a Sunday circulation of 62,000; in *American* when circulation reaches 62,000 Kane has a sign with that figure painted on a wall opposite his rival's window and on 300 other signs around the city. Kane's cocky offer to buy out his influential rival is based on a similar offer Hearst made to James Gordon Bennett of the New York *Herald* (Lundberg, p. 115). The episodes involving the publisher Benton in *American* are based on actual events involving Hearst's arch rival, Joseph Pulitzer of the New York *World*, the most successful newspaper publisher in America before Hearst. Hearst succeeded with the *Journal* as Kane succeeds with the *Enquirer*, partly by imitating the format and typographical layout of his rival and partly by conducting high-priced raids on his talent. "In three months," Lundberg reports, "Hearst had taken Pulitzer's whole Sunday staff of editors, artists, and writers" (p. 53). When Hearst's *Journal* passed Pulitzer's *World* in circulation, Hearst, who had a reputation for entertaining his staff royally, "gave a large dinner at Delmonico's celebrating the fact" (Older, p. 143).

Like Kane, Hearst also built up circulation through his relentless attacks on moneyed interests on behalf of the common man. Within his first few months as owner of the *Examiner*, he had enlisted in a half dozen such crusades (Older, p. 79). Throughout his career he waged continuous war against the syndicates that conspired to get control of a commodity or service and manipulate it for financial gain—the various "trusts": traction, utilities, gas, ice, oil, coal, and so on. Very often the enemy was Hearst's perennial nemesis J. P. Morgan, the model for Walter Parks Thatcher, with whose banking firm the big trusts were often in league. The scene in which Kane backs down Thatcher and the traction trust with incriminating evidence is also modeled on fact: Hearst arranged for sensitive documents to be stolen from an official of Standard Oil and

used them for years to blackmail or discredit his enemies (Lundberg, pp. 122–35). When Thatcher (through Thatcher Jr.) has the last word by taking over the papers, it is a fictionalization inspired by an actual fact. The financial condition of Hearst's papers was so shaky during the depression that it was necessary to secure massive bank loans. Lundberg reported that "Although nominally controlled by Hearst, the Hearst publishing properties are actually controlled through the instrumentality of these bank loans by a Wall Street syndicate headed by the National City Bank of New York" (p. 310).

Kane's involvement with politicians and his own political campaign are told within the framework of his first marriage. Emily Norton, the president's niece, actually bears little resemblance to Hearst's first wife, showgirl Millicent Willson. Nevertheless, many of the personal details and most of the political material are reworkings of Hearst legends and facts. When the writers have Kane in the Lincoln Room at the White House admiring a painting of Lincoln, they have in mind Hearst's well-known idolatry of Lincoln. Emily's father remarks snidely that Lincoln can be a great inspiration even though he never advocated income taxes or municipal ownership of public utilities, two of Hearst's favorite causes. Kane's extravagant gesture of bringing the yacht on his honeymoon is probably inspired by the well-publicized incident of Phebe Hearst in New York sending her son in California a yacht so large it had to be disassembled for shipment across the Isthmus of Panama on railroad cars (Older, p. 166). The interruption of the honeymoon is modeled on an actual incident reported by both Older and Lundberg: Hearst was vacationing in Egypt when an obscure item about a cherished political cause in a days-old newspaper caught his eye and sent him racing back to America to intervene. The Hearst cause was the defeat of a treaty that would leave the Panama Canal unfortified; in making Kane's cause the blockage of the lease of Teapot Dome and other oil reserves to the oil interests, *American* attaches typical Kane behavior to the most celebrated political scandal of the early twentieth century.

Kane begins a restless campaign against the oil leases. After the assassination attempt on President Norton, copies of Kane's savage personal attacks on him in the *Enquirer* are found in the would-be assassin's pocket. The newsreel directions in *American* say this footage is to be "modeled on Florida attempt upon President Roosevelt" (p. 18), but audiences of the time would have remembered the McKinley assassination and Hearst's widely reputed implication in it. Hearst had engaged in unusually virulent attacks on McKinley. After McKinley's second election the following admonition appeared in a Hearst paper editorial: "If bad men cannot be got rid of except by killing, then the killing must be done" (Lundberg, p. 89). The attacks continued right up to the assassination. Various New York newspapers reported that the assassin, Leon

Czolgosz, had on his person a copy of a *Journal* attack upon McKinley and other inflammatory clippings (Lundberg, p. 94). There was public outrage, and Hearst was burned in effigy in a number of cities.

Kane's campaign for governor is based mainly on reported circumstances of Hearst's 1905 campaign for mayor, with other details added from Hearst's unsuccessful 1906 campaign for governor. It was said that Hearst decided to run as an independent candidate for mayor after Charles Murphy of Tammany (the model for Boss Rogers, who is later renamed Gettys) denied him the regular party's nomination. The principal theme of Hearst's mayoralty campaign, like Kane's, was Tammany and the political bosses (Lundberg, p. 102). In his various campaigns Hearst had gigantic rallies in Madison Square Garden. In his campaign for the governorship he made conspicuous use of his two-year-old son. A line in Hearst's capitulation speech in the governorship race may be the source for the theme of Kane's campaign speech at the Garden:

I congratulate the bosses on their foresight in defeating me, for my first act as Governor would have been to lift the dishonest officials by the hair of their unworthy heads. [Older, p. 315]

In *American* Kane actually wins the gubernatorial race, but it is stolen from him by the Murphy forces; a montage in the newsreel shows assorted views of the fraud—an election watcher being dragged out of his polling place, fake ballots being made up in a back room, and a ballot box being thrown from a rowboat into the East River. This material is based directly on Lundberg's description:

. . . *Hearst won the election*. He was the victor by several thousand votes, it has since been established, but the Tammany bruisers, heeding their instructions from Murphy, went berserk. Hearst's campaign people were assaulted and ballot boxes were stolen from the Hearst wards and dumped into the East River. [P. 103]

Some of the most significant personal complications of Kane's life in *American* are also traceable to Hearst material. Of Hearst's early newspaper days in New York Lundberg writes:

At this period Hearst was seen at all the theatrical first nights, he frequented Delmonico's and the other fashionable restaurants, rode in one of the newfangled expensive French automobiles. He was usually accompanied by two of the prettiest girls that could currently be found along Broadway. Hearst's hobbies, since the Harvard days, have been the theater and the girls. [P. 58]

Several scenes in *American* are included to demonstrate these same traits in Charles Foster Kane. Not only was Hearst a womanizer, but he was also notoriously indiscriminating in his choice of female companions. His well-known fondness for shopgirl and showgirl types is undoubtedly the inspiration for Kane's attraction to Susan Alexander. The promotional scheme that causes the rift with Leland is probably based—as is the incident of the opera review which will appear in the second draft—on Hearst lore:

Hearst has been a silent partner in other Broadway productions, and his newspapers brought the public in by one means or another, usually by extravagant praise. It has meant peremptory dismissal for a Hearst reviewer or critic to denounce a show or a film in which Hearst has an interest. [Lundberg, p. 302]

Hearst's great love for his mother and her strong influence on his development were well known. Characterizations of her in Mrs. Older's biography such as that she "determined that what was achieved by her with such effort should come easily to her son . . . that he should have every advantage, every incentive and aid to go forward" (p. 5) may have influenced the characterization of Kane's mother. Kane's strong attachment to his mother's possessions is probably also inspired by Hearst. Mrs. Older speaks of Phebe Hearst's "'real' lace . . . bought by her husband . . . [which] to-day . . . is carefully stored at San Simeon" (p. 7); and Lundberg records that Hearst maintained a large warehouse full of antiques in New York (p. 327). These two facts are telescoped for the scene between Susan and Kane which appears in the second draft and has Kane on his way to a warehouse to see some of his mother's things. Finally, the strongest of all Kane's attachments to mother and youth may also have been inspired by Hearst. One of Hearst's childhood friends was a neighbor, Katherine Soulé, called "Pussy" by her playmates. She and Hearst often played together in the Hearst walled garden as Phebe Hearst tended her flowers. Miss Soulé recalled to Mrs. Older:

Willie Hearst was conscious of all beauty. When his mother bought new French dishes he pointed out the rose buds to Pussy. One day his head appeared at the top of the fence and excitedly he called, "Pussy, come and see the 'La France'!"

Pussy had never heard of a La France, and so she hastily climbed the ladder to see this new exciting object.

"Why," she exclaimed, "It's just a rose!"

"It's a La France," corrected the boy.

A large pale pink rose was in bloom, and it must have been one of the first of that variety in California, for the La France rose was introduced in France by Guillot in 1867. Round and round the La France walked the two children.

"Isn't it lovely?" exclaimed Pussy. "I can't believe it's real."

"Pussy, if I wasn't afraid my mother would be mad, I'd cut the La France and give it to you." [P. 19]

3

American is no more rough than any other first draft, but it has special problems ordinary first drafts don't have. Mainly these stem from the use of Hearst biographical material. Essentially *American* is a dramatization of Hearst anecdotes, legends, and rumors of all kinds borrowed indiscriminately from a variety of sources. To play the material in anything close to its state in *American* would open the way to ghastly legal difficulties involving libel, invasion of privacy, plagiarism, and copyright infringement. Strictly from a legal standpoint, *American* would be unusable without a massive overhaul. There is also a dramatic side to the problem. Hearst was too free and easy a source of information for an unsteady writer like Mankiewicz. Most of *American* is quite simply *à clef* plotting with only the barest effort at characterization. Kane himself at this stage is more an unfocused composite than a character portrait, a stand-in mouthing dialogue manufactured for some imaginary Hearst. In this sense Hearst is one of the principal obstacles to the script's further development. Before any real progress with the characterization can be made, the ties to his life will have to be cut drastically. This de-Hearstification of the material begins immediately after *American* and continues right down to the very end of the scripting. A lot of Hearst material survives in the film, but far less than was there at the beginning. One reason Welles could maintain so confidently that Kane wasn't Hearst may be that he had eliminated so much Hearst material from the scripts that he thought he had actually somehow eliminated Hearst in the process.

The first set of changes after *American* known to survive are contained in a forty-four-page studio typescript carbon, dated 28 April and marked "Mankiewicz" in an unknown hand. The revisions begin with two outright curiosities. The first revision calls for the Colorado sequence to end with the camera coming to rest on the sled and revealing the Rosebud trademark and label; an added note describes the way the scene originally ended and suggests shooting it both ways. The second revision calls for Thompson to let out a loud "Bronx cheer" as he closes the Thatcher manuscript and gives it back to the guard. Some very significant changes are also introduced in these pages. A decision has been made about what to do with Emily's material (most of it is to be reassigned to Leland), and the framing segments with Bernstein and Leland have been rewritten to reflect this change. The "stolen election" motif borrowed from Hearst's 1905 campaign has been abandoned; now

Kane actually loses. The cause is presented in two important new scenes—one in which Emily insists Kane make a call with her after the rally in Madison Square Garden and its sequel, the encounter in Kane and Susan's "love nest." A follow-up scene is added on election night in which an enraged Emily confesses to Leland how she really feels about Kane and what all these years with him have been for her.

Emily: Why should anyone vote for him? He's made it quite clear to the people what he thinks of them. Children—to be told one thing one day, something else the next, as the whim seizes him. And they're supposed to be grateful and love and adore him—because he sees that they are well-fed and well-clothed. And only pay a nickel in the street cars . . . Personal lives? There are no personal lives for people like us . . . If I'd thought of my life with Charles as a personal life, I'd have left him . . . five years ago [after the assassination attempt]. Maybe that's what I should have done, the first time he showed me what a mad dog he really was . . . I didn't ask him for anything—any love or affection—not a thing except to keep up appearances—for *his* sake and Howard's and—to behave decently like an ordinary, civilized human being. But he couldn't do that. And so he and a cheap little— . . . If you're asking me to sympathize with him, Brad, you're wasting your time. (pause) There's only one person I'm sorry for . . . That—that shabby little girl.

Herman Mankiewicz testified in the Lundberg case, in response to a question about the mechanics of plotting, that the alternate ending with the sled was written at Welles' specific insistence.⁷ Is it not reasonable to suppose that other of these changes also originated with him?

Second draft. The next full draft carries the handwritten identifying date 9 May 1940. It is stenographically edited to 325 pages (to indicate that everything in *American* had been accounted for, by whatever means) but actually has text on only about 300 pages. Approximately half these pages carry no individual date; the other half are inserted revision pages dated 30 April and 14 May, all within the Victorville period.

At the beginning of this draft the camera moving instruction is dropped and the opening is written as it will be in the shooting script. Now Kane calls "Rosebud" only once. The news digest opens with two quotations from Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." Among the Hearst materials eliminated from the newsreel are the details of Kane's school history, his expulsion from college in Germany, and the information about the election fraud. An all-important set of directions about Thompson appears

7. Lundberg case: Mankiewicz testimony, pp. 103–4.

at the end of the projection room sequence, again perhaps as a result of consultations with Welles. Though these directions do not actually appear in the shooting script, nevertheless they are followed precisely in the film:

It is important to remember always that only at the very end of the story is Thompson himself a personality. Until then, throughout the picture, we only photograph Thompson's back, shoulders, or his shadow—sometimes we only record his voice. He is not until the final scene a "character." He is the personification of the search for the truth about Charles Foster Kane. He is the investigator.

The scenes in Rome are written very differently. The business conference with Thatcher has been restructured. Bernstein comes in and abruptly informs Thatcher he is Kane's business manager. Thatcher dislikes him at once, obviously for ethnic as well as professional reasons, and insists that Kane send him from the room when they discuss business. (Kane refuses.) Kane inspects the book and casually selects the *Enquirer*. (When the follow-up scene is played later, Bernstein provides a new shading to Kane's scheme to fool Thatcher—he had actually been receiving copies of the *Enquirer* daily for two years prior to their meeting.) The later encounter between Thatcher and Kane the yellow journalist is moved from Thatcher's manuscript in this draft and placed in chronological order in Kane's career, so that it appears as the last of the running-a-newspaper sequences in Bernstein's story.

Another curious restructuring of this sort takes place in the Bernstein material. Bernstein's story begins with the sequel to the meeting with Thatcher in Rome. It continues, however, not with the early days of publishing but with new material not in *American*—Kane coming to the Chicago offices after Susan's debut to find Leland passed out at his typewriter. (This incident in turn is broken into two segments, with the sequel of Kane finishing the review presented later, in Leland's story.) Now come the publishing sequences—the early days at the *Enquirer*, the circulation buildup, the encounter with Thatcher—and then the departure for Europe and Kane's return with an engagement announcement. There is considerable pruning and shaping in this area. Various scenes of the first *Enquirer* days are telescoped. Others are pared or eliminated outright. Hearst material goes—conferences with the rival publisher, among other things, and a few of those tiresome scenes of restaurant and theatre going. Kane's departure for Europe is now played on the deck of a Cunard liner about to sail, a change doubtless made to accommodate a bit of Welles-sounding horseplay. As the liner is about to cast off, directions read: "From offstage can be heard the steward's cry, indispensable in any Mercury Production, the old familiar cry of 'All Ashore That's Going Ashore!'"

At this point in *American* the material assigned to Bernstein ended. In the new draft, material which appeared later in *American* is now placed here. First are the Xanadu scenes with Bernstein as an uncomfortable social guest. The Jerry Martin business has been eliminated and a new character, Charles Foster Kane, Jr., age twenty-five, written in. The following line of Bernstein's is probably intended to explain why there is no heir apparent to the publishing empire: "I'm sorry young Mr. Kane didn't work out at the office, Mr. Kane—I guess he ain't cut out for newspaper work." Back in the frame Bernstein tells Thompson what hurt Kane most was not Susan's leaving him but having to give up the papers to Thatcher and Company. Then comes the sequence in which Thatcher Jr. informs Kane that Thatcher and Company is taking over the papers.

In *American* Bernstein's testimony ended with his reading of the letter from Emily's lawyers. After that came the material that could have been Emily's. In the first changes the letter was taken away from Bernstein and replaced with the suggestion that Thompson look up Leland. In the new draft most of the Emily material is inserted in Leland's story in the chronological order in which it would have occurred in *Leland's life*. As a consequence, Leland's narration separates into three distinct segments. The first extends from his early days with Kane at the paper when the two were inseparable associates and companions to the first signs of disagreement between them over Kane's handling of the Cuban war. This segment closes with Kane's sailing for Europe. Back in the frame Leland now reads the letter from Emily's lawyers, and his story resumes with Leland telling about Kane and Emily, from their early, serene days together, through the attacks on the president, the assassination attempt, the political campaign, and finally Emily's departure. The third segment of Leland's narrative covers Leland's departure for Chicago, the opera review incident, and his final break with Kane. Two new scenes are added here. In one, after Leland's transfer to Chicago, Reilly appears in Kane's office with Leland's returned severance check; the Declaration of Principles is also in the envelope. (Later on when Reilly and his scheme are eliminated this incident will be rewritten as the coda to the opera review.) The other added scene is the sequel of the opera review incident, Leland waking up to find Kane finishing his review. There is also considerable shifting from the previous order of the material in Leland's revised story, as well as considerable paring. Again, much of the eliminated material is Hearstian, such as Kane's admiration for Lincoln and his constant shopgirl or showgirl companions.

Scenes of Kane's early years with Susan appear for the first time in the second draft. The details of their first meeting are somewhat different from those in the shooting script. Susan and Kane bump into one another on the street and as he moves aside he steps on a plank covering

a bad place on the sidewalk and is splashed with mud. Susan laughs; Kane reacts as a crusading editor would: "If these sidewalks were kept in condition—instead of the money going to some cheap grafter—" In the description of Susan's room we are told of a few personal belongings on her chiffonier: "These include a photograph of a gent and lady, obviously Susan's parents, and a few objets d'art. One, 'At the Japanese Rolling Ball Game at Coney Island,' and—perhaps this is part of the Japanese loot—the glass globe with the snow scene Kane was holding in his hand in the first sequence." Kane tries all sorts of diversions to help Susan forget her toothache; he sings a popular tune, does a soft-shoe, and makes shadowgraph figures on the wall. Susan's stern landlady appears to protest the door being closed, but once she sees who Susan's visitor is she backs off and closes it herself. Susan's singing lessons, her opera career, and her attempted suicide now appear, written substantially as they will appear in the final script. Next in *American* was the Xanadu material with Jerry Martin. With that eliminated, next in the second draft are scenes aboard Kane's yacht (the Kanes have been on a long cruise) and the picnic in the Everglades. Next is the scene in Susan's room when she has packed to leave, and afterwards the instructions appear for the first time for Kane to smash up her room.

The incident of Thatcher and Company taking over the papers, which would be Kane's next major crisis chronologically and which actually came next in *American*, has been moved to Bernstein's story in the second draft. After that came the death of Kane Jr., and in the second draft the aftermath of it has been expanded. Now we move to the chapel at Xanadu after the funeral for the burial. Kane is overcome with grief. As he stares at the row of crypts he begins to prattle about his mother, who is buried here. He recalls how she loved poetry and begins to read from the verse inscription on the wall of the crypt. (It begins with the first line on the inscription at the City of Brass in *1001 Nights*, "The drunkenness of youth has passed like a fever.")

In the wrap-up sequence at Xanadu the scene with the wisecracking reporters waiting for the train has been eliminated. In the epilogue a striking new direction is added, that the final shot will come to rest on a "No Trespassing" sign.

Important progress is made in the second draft of the script. Several redundant scenes have disappeared as well as a good deal of Hearst material and that lengthy, ludicrous business involving Susan's lover, Jerry Martin (though some equally ludicrous scenes, such as those involving Kane's father, are still in). Good, durable scenes between Kane and Susan have been added. Perhaps the most inspired touch in the new script (and seemingly the most characteristically Wellesian) is the part where Kane finds Leland passed out at his typewriter and finishes his review in the same lacerating vein in which Leland had started it. Sec-

tions of dialogue have been more finely sculpted, and roughly a third to a half of the lines are written substantially as they will be played in the film.

On the other hand, there are still fundamental structural and dramatic problems at this stage. Among the most glaring is the handling of Kane's decision to enter newspaper publishing. The scenes in Rome set up too complicated an explanation which blunts the impact of so momentous an event—Kane's staging a dissolute party to make Thatcher think he's a worthless playboy; Kane's pretending the *Enquirer* is a casual decision when in fact he has carefully prepared to take over the paper. The Rome business will continue to present problems of this sort until it is finally eliminated altogether. Serious structural imbalances are also created by the ordering in the second draft. So much crucial material in Kane's life has been partly or wholly assigned to Bernstein—the encounter with Thatcher, the break with Leland, the deterioration of his marriage to Susan, the loss of the papers—that Bernstein almost attains the status of what would be devastating for the story, a privileged narrator. It may be that for part of it Mankiewicz was simply indulging himself;⁸ or, since Bernstein is allowed to confide certain special things about Kane in this draft, it may be that some serious consideration was being given to making him a kind of focal point for Kane's story. In any case, a reverse trend soon becomes evident in the next drafts, as some of the material assigned to Bernstein here is shifted back to its original position. Other narratives suffer accordingly with the shift of material to Bernstein. Thatcher, for instance, is now left without any scenes between him and the adult Kane. Emily's material also continues to pose a major problem. Assigning it to Leland loads his narration down with dramatic crises—not only the two that are his, Reilly's scheme and the opera debut, but three more of Emily's—the assassination attempt, Susan, and the election loss. Eventually these will have to be telescoped into a dramatically manageable number of crisis moments. On balance, the second draft might be best characterized as a much-improved rough draft. It is not until the all-important third draft that the *Citizen Kane* script undergoes its most significant dramatic distillation.

4

Third draft. There are clues in the second draft that Welles may have been guiding the script at this stage to a much greater degree than has been conceded. In any case, in the new draft his direct involvement can be documented and precisely identified. According to Houseman, he and Mankiewicz returned from Victorville and delivered their script to

8. John Houseman testified in the Lundberg case that Bernstein was Mankiewicz's favorite character in the script (Houseman testimony, p. 112).

RKO on Monday, 27 May. Mankiewicz then left for five weeks to pursue an assignment at MGM. After waiting around a few days for the script to be typed, Houseman took a train to New York. At the same time Houseman was on his way East, Welles, who had been in New York to appear at an RKO sales convention, was on his way back to Hollywood.⁹ Revisions began again 1 June, the day after Welles' return. Over the next two weeks around 140 new revision pages are inserted into this draft. The circumstances themselves suggest that most of these changes can probably be attributed to Welles. Corroborating evidence makes that almost certain.

There is considerable minor tampering in the first third of the new draft. The Colorado sequence has been reworked, apparently to bring the characters into sharper focus. Several lines assigned to Mrs. Kane in earlier drafts are reassigned to Kane Sr. and to Thatcher. The changes seem intended to soften her. For instance, when the adults go outside to tell the boy he is being taken away, Mrs. Kane no longer introduces Thatcher (apparently she is too upset) and he must introduce himself. At the same time Kane Sr. is made to come off in a worse light. For instance, Thatcher's line "fifty thousand dollars a year . . . to be paid" is moved so that it now precedes Kane Sr.'s line of capitulation, "let's hope it's all for the best." The problematic Rome sequence also has a new look. When Kane and Thatcher meet, Kane has a new conception of their relationship. He thinks he's been deliberately kept abroad by Thatcher these seventeen years and asks sarcastically whether he'll have to go through the immigration process when he returns to America. (He tells Bernstein later he thinks Thatcher did it so he could have his own way with Kane's fortune.) Bernstein also has a somewhat different manner. He is deliberately oafish and offensive with Thatcher. Two structural changes are made in Thatcher's narration. The financier's encounter with Kane over the traction trust has been removed from Bernstein's story and returned to Thatcher's, where it was in the first draft. The follow-up scene, however, showing the Thatcher interests taking over control of the papers, has now been eliminated. (Eventually it will be redrafted by Welles himself during the shooting.)¹⁰

The principal changes in the third draft are concentrated in the segments of narration belonging to Bernstein and Leland. Several expository sequences, some of them quite lengthy, have been eliminated outright. Among these are: a dinner at Rector's with Kane and Leland and their girls; the appearance of Kane Sr. and his new wife; the honeymoon sequences with Emily; a sequence early in his marriage with her

9. Houseman, *Run-Through*, p. 457. Lundberg case: Mankiewicz testimony, p. 161. RKO Employment Records for Herman Mankiewicz. MGM Employment Records for Herman Mankiewicz. *Film Daily*, 31 May 1940, p. 2.

10. Richard Wilson recalls that shooting was halted while Welles went off and rewrote this scene.

showing Kane doting over his young son but already imperiling his family life because of his preoccupation with his work; a sequence when Kane and his family and a group of politicians are gathered to announce his entry into politics; and all the material pertaining to Susan's and Kane's arrival in Chicago for her opera debut. All of Bernstein's Xanadu scenes have been dropped, and so have the encounters between Kane and a rival publisher. Several key episodes of Kane's career have been compressed. The circulation buildup is now shown in a montage: the composing room, the Declaration of Principles on a front page, a wagon with a sign "*Enquirer*: Circulation 26,000," various shots of the paper being delivered, a new number (62,000) painted on a window, and Kane, Bernstein, and Leland looking in at this window and discussing the rival paper. The scenes showing how Kane checkmated Thatcher and his cronies in the Hearst style with pilfered documents have been eliminated, and there appears instead a three-and-a-half-page montage of the *Enquirer's* growing impact on the American scene in the 1890s. This montage ends with a close-up of Kane's passport (it reads: "Occupation—Journalist"), which provides a bridge to the scene of Kane's departure for Europe on the Cunard liner. Another montage is added to depict the passage of time during Kane's absence: through the *E* of the *Enquirer* letters on the building we see Bernstein slaving away at his desk through the various seasons. The assassination material has been condensed in much the same fashion. The scenes showing how Kane's homelife suffers as he becomes more deeply involved in the oil scandal story are eliminated. After Kane's encounter with the president there is a rapid montage containing cartoon and editorial attacks on the president, ending with a close-up of the word TREASON, then the assassination itself—a hand firing a gun, hands extending from uniforms and struggling with the first hand, the White House in the background, a ticker tape spelling out the news.

Some new material has been added in these portions of the third draft. Georgie, the madame, makes her first appearance in the story. When Leland is protesting Kane's handling of the Cuba business the day of the newspaper party, Kane mollifies him with talk of a special "girl" Georgie has lined up for him, and the party eventually adjourns to Georgie's. On the day of the assassination attempt, years later, Kane is at Georgie's when Reilly calls to break the news. (Georgie's part stayed in despite Hays Office objections and her scenes were actually shot, but she was eventually edited out.) An important new speech is added for Leland just as he is about to tell Thompson what he knows about Kane's life with Emily:

Leland: He married for love—(a little laugh). That's why he did everything. That's why he went into politics. It seems we weren't enough. He wanted all the voters to love him too.

All he really wanted out of life was love. —That's Charlie's story—it's the story of how he lost it. You see, he just didn't have any to give. He loved Charlie Kane, of course, very dearly—and his mother, I guess he always loved her. As for Emily—well, all I can tell you is Emily's story as she told it to me, which probably isn't very fair—there's supposed to be two sides to every story—and I guess there are—I guess there're more than two sides—

Also newly added are two sequences of Kane and Emily on a ship bound for Europe, added to replace the deleted honeymoon material. This exchange occurs at their first meeting:

Kane: Would you do me a favor?

Emily: I think so.

Kane: Slap me, Emily. Slap me hard.

Emily: Why?

Kane: I'd rather not tell you till I've kissed you, but believe me, Emily, I deserve it.

(Pause)

Emily: You've been following me around the deck, haven't you?

Kane: All night.

Emily: How long are you willing to follow me?

Kane: Forever.

In the second new sequence they are making wedding plans. Kane is impetuous and eager to get back and marry at once; Emily wonders if she'll ever know Kane and whether they'll be happy together.

The assassination attempt and its aftermath are still presenting serious problems in the third draft. When Kane hears the news, his first reaction is an order not to play the assassination down but to give it full coverage in the Kane papers. Then, without waiting for further word on the president's condition, Kane writes an editorial praising the fallen leader. Leland points out that this new posture doesn't make sense, since only the day before Kane had called the president a traitor. Kane says he has been right all along but now he must think of Emily. This incident is probably intended to show how Kane will go to any length to sell papers but will always insist on the highmindedness and selflessness of his motives. On the heels of this comes the first Leland crisis. Leland brings up the matter of the promotional scheme and puts it bluntly: "I will not write a good review of a play because somebody paid a thousand dollars for an advertisement in the *Enquirèr*." Then Leland, acting as peacemaker, comes to what he says is the real purpose of the discussion, Emily and the fact that she's going to leave Kane and her various reasons for it. From this the discussion moves to the motives behind Kane's behavior, and their exchange concludes with what will eventually be-

come the “want the voters’ love” and “love on my own terms”-exchange. Kane and Leland leave the building under police protection (an angry mob holds Kane responsible for the assassination attempt), and as Kane drives off, Leland’s last words are that he wants to be transferred to Chicago. Next are scenes of Kane at home pleading with a distraught Emily not to leave him now. After this is the scene with Reilly informing Kane that Leland returned his check with the torn-up Declaration of Principles. The problem of a surplus of crises in this area of the story persists. The eventual solution will be to merge four crises into two—to drop the assassination attempt and the promotional scheme and build everything around the love nest and the opera debut—but such a solution is not yet in sight.

While the script was undergoing this set of revisions, Houseman was back in New York making preparations for an upcoming stage adaptation of Richard Wright’s *Native Son*. Sometime around the middle of the month he received a revised script from Mankiewicz. He wired back on 16 June:¹¹

Dear Mank: Leaving tonight for Carolina to confer with Paul Green and Richard Wright. Will report in detail. Received your cut version also several new scenes of Orson’s. Approve all cuts. Still don’t like Rome scene and will try to work on it my humble self. After much careful reading I like all Orson’s scenes including new montages and Chicago opera scenes with exception of Kane Emily sequence. Don’t like scene on boat. Query any first meeting scene between them. However, do feel there must be some intimacy between them before oil scandal comes to shatter it stop Simply don’t understand sequence or sense of Orson’s telescoped Kane Leland Emily assassination scenes. There again will try and make up my own version. Please keep me posted. Love to sarah.

In scarcely two weeks after the script was in Welles’ hands, major changes had been made. First, about seventy-five pages of the Mankiewicz-Houseman material—most of it in the form of expository and character-dialogue sequences—had been eliminated. Typically, many of the deleted sequences have been replaced with snappy or arresting montages. It is the first unmistakable appearance of the witty bravado style that is the film’s most characteristic trait. Creative ellipsis of this type will continue to be one of the most apparent signs of Welles’ hand in the scripting. Several brand new scenes have also appeared—Houseman’s wire identifies their origin—among them, the shipboard meeting with Emily and Kane’s composing an editorial praising the fall-

11. Houseman to Mankiewicz, night letter, 16 June 1940; carbon in the John Houseman Collection, Special Collections Library, UCLA. Printed by permission of John Houseman.

en president. Other characteristic changes have also appeared. The opera material Houseman refers to is a lengthy direction indicating we are to see the second playing of Susan's debut from her point of view, unquestionably one of the most inspired touches in the film. Welles has also begun to set his hand to three of the most problematic areas of Kane's private life: taking over the paper, Emily, and the break with Leland. Not much of the material introduced by Welles at this point will survive in the form in which it first appears. Nevertheless, the revisions are both characteristic and significant. In a very short time Welles has already worked some fundamental changes on the nature of the script.

5

*Fourth draft.*¹² The fourth draft, called "Final," is the first on which the name *Citizen Kane* appears. It is dated 18 June, three days after the revisions of the latest date in the third draft. It contains forty-three new (blue) revision pages, dated 18 June and 19 June. There are numerous minor revisions, things like adjustment of facts in the newsreel and the frame story and polishing of dialogue. Leland, for instance, is now given one of his best lines; Kane, he says, was "disappointed in the world. So he built one of his own." But the principal changes are deletions. The entire Rome business is finally eliminated; all that remains of it now is a brief allusion Bernstein makes to Thompson. It had been torturous from the first, with too much sidetracking into secondary motives such as how Kane came to know Bernstein and how and why they hatched their plot to fool Thatcher. With it all out of the way, Kane's action is now all the more striking and interesting for its impulsiveness—just a single sharp line in a letter, "I think it would be fun to run a newspaper." Welles' two shipboard scenes with Kane and Emily are out again, though the lengthy, talky scenes depicting the widening problems in their marriage are still in; the solution to how best to deal with their relationship is still not in sight. Also out, possibly for Hays Office reasons, is Susan's landlady and her capitulation about the door; now it remains open, and Susan herself asks who Kane is. The script had begun to firm up in its

12. There is a 137-page script fragment in the Mercury Theatre Archive dated 5 June. It is a typescript original which contains a full text up to Leland's departure for Chicago, followed by a two-page sketch covering Susan's opera debut. It contains new material not in the third draft (for instance, Leland reciting Walt Whitman during the Rome party) but also earlier material that is eliminated from the third draft (for instance, the honeymoon in the North Woods). There is a handwritten *M* on the front cover, and the letter *M* is typed in after the page number of each page. On the cover page of a carbon copy of this same item is a handwritten notation, "Mank version." Apparently it is a partial revision of the second draft proffered by Mankiewicz but largely ignored by Welles. This item is not in the RKO files.

third draft. After these revisions and excisions in the fourth, only a few glaring problems remained to be solved, and the essential dramatic foundation of the film was now set.

Fifth draft. Herman Mankiewicz went back on the RKO payroll 18 June, approximately the date the fourth draft was completed, and stayed on through 27 July, five days after the full shooting schedule had begun. (During his five-week absence he had written the first draft of the script of *Comrade X* for MGM. He received no screen credit for this.) There are still several major decisions to be made about the script after 18 June, and undoubtedly Mankiewicz was involved in some of these, but his principal responsibilities during this period likely consisted of helping to sculpt the scenes more finely in rehearsal and shepherding the record of the changes.

The new draft, dated 24 June and called "Revised Final," incorporates revisions since 19 June and additional blue-page changes dated 27 and 28 June and 2 July. The most significant changes in this draft involve Kane's first wife and their son. From the first draft, Emily Norton has been alive in 1940. Now the letter from her lawyers is out, and the newsreel informs us she died in 1914. Appearances of a grown-up son of Kane were removed earlier, and now the remaining allusion to him—his presence offscreen at Xanadu and his burial in the Xanadu chapel—are also removed. The scene after the election disaster in which Emily talks at length to Leland about the various problems in her marriage has also been eliminated. The early romance of Emily and Kane is now reduced to a single shot—an insert of a diamond ring on a hand, after which the camera pulls back to reveal the lovers kissing. The deterioration of the marriage is dealt with in a single scene. Emily is in the bedroom with the morning *Enquirer*. The headline reads "President Mum on Oil Theft." A doting Kane enters to kiss her goodbye; she remonstrates gently with him about his unreasonableness toward the president. This way of playing it, of course, is the original basis for the breakfast table montage. Several lesser revisions are worth noticing, most of them in the running-a-newspaper sequences. A few of the Welles montages are out—the circulation buildup as he wrote it, the growth of the *Enquirer* in the 1890s, and the change of seasons. Kane's departure for Europe is introduced in the party sequence, making the Cunard dock scenes redundant. The dialogue of Kane's dramatically troublesome confrontation with Leland over Cuba is rewritten once again.

Another set of changes in this draft is of special interest. Revised pages for the projection room sequence carrying the date 2 July are inserted. Shooting on *Citizen Kane* began on 29 June with the projection room sequence. These pages have been rewritten to conform to the way the scene was actually shot. By comparing the revision pages with the

previous draft one has precise examples of how the script was undergoing changes in the shooting. In the script, there was a lengthy digression in this sequence almost at once (right after the remark "Seventy years of a man's life"): a long quotation from a derogatory obituary of Kane by Arthur Ellis in *"American Review."*¹³ It has now been eliminated completely, and on the screen Rawlston comes at once to the heart of the matter—the need for an "angle." (It had been "motivation" in the script, a word with considerably less resonance for the meaning of the film.) A Hearstian allusion to Kane's labor record is removed. Rawlston's reply when Thompson begins to raise an objection—"Nothing is ever better than finding out what makes people tick"—is replaced with a direct order: "Find out about Rosebud." Several fragments of lines are re-assigned from Rawlston to the background voices. All these changes help to step up the pace and contribute to the frenetic energy of the projection room sequence as it is played on the screen. Clearly the script is constantly being altered, as would be customary, say, in the rehearsals of a play, to fit the necessities of the performance.

Sixth draft. This draft, dated 9 July, is 155 mimeographed pages, and is called "Second Revised Final."¹⁴ One fundamental change has been made in it. The assassination attempt on the president and Kane's alleged complicity in it, along with the lengthy aftermath involving, first, Kane and Leland, and then Kane and Emily, eighteen pages altogether, has been eliminated entirely (all that remains about the assassination is a brief mention in the newsreel), and corresponding adjustments have been made. The account of Kane's first meeting with Susan, originally a part of her narration, has been moved into Leland's story to replace the assassination material. In this position their meeting is followed by the political campaign; now there is only one political crisis to be dealt with. Raymond has been given several new lines, including his best: "Rosebud? I'll tell you about Rosebud. How much is it worth to you?" The paper is now spelled *Inquirer*. Two extremely important new conceptions also appear. The first is the solution of how to deal with Kane's first marriage, in the celebrated breakfast table montage: "NOTE: The following scenes cover a period of nine years—and played in the same set with only changes in lighting, special effects outside the window, and wardrobe." The second provides what may be the film's most striking, and certainly one of its most resonant, images. The previous draft called for an unidentified scene "still being written" after Kane leaves Susan's smashed-up room; it appears in the new draft—the instruction to walk

13. Mankiewicz had cribbed it from William Allen White's obituary of Frank A. Munsey and inserted it in *American*. See George Britt, *Forty Years—Forty Millions* (New York, 1935), p. 17.

14. This was the script submitted to the Hays Office. The copy in the Mercury Theatre files is a typescript carbon with some scenes penciled through, possibly by Welles.

down the corridor between facing mirrors. In terms of actual progress toward the final version of the script and the completed state of the film, the sixth draft is second in importance only to the third.

Seventh draft. The final script is dated 16 July 1940, less than a week before the start of a regular shooting schedule on 22 July. It does not reflect changes suggested in a 15 July letter from the Hays Office.¹⁵ As in previous drafts, numerous small revisions have been made; for instance, the scene in the newsreel of Kane being interviewed dockside after a trip to Europe has been added, and adjustments have been made in such problematic sequences as Kane's encounters with Thatcher over the traction trusts, with Leland over Cuba, and with Emily at the breakfast table. Two important structural changes have been made, both involving Kane's relationship with Leland. In the previous script the newspaper party was broken into two segments, with the first half in Bernstein's story and the second half (the long discussion of Cuba and the adjournment to Georgie's) in Leland's, with Kane's European trip and engagement in between. In the new script the party is played continuously. The opera review incident had also been broken into two segments through several drafts, half in Bernstein's story and the continuation in Leland's; now the sequence is played continuously at the later point. As the story was originally conceived, we were to see the growth of the disharmony between the two friends in a series of encounters over various issues—Cuba, the attacks on the president, the promotional scheme, inattention to Emily, the election loss, Susan, and the opera review. These new revisions are a continuation of the process through which the number of issues and encounters is cut down. Eventually their argument over Cuba will be eliminated too.

One later set of changes is also inserted into this script—a revised version of the tent scene in the Everglades dated 19 July (shot 105 in the published script). This material was to be shot on 22 and 23 July, and the dialogue is being firmed up in rehearsal. Several of Susan's more sententious lines are eliminated, and one passage which seems too uncomfortably close to something Leland said earlier—"Only love me! Don't expect me to love *you*"—is significantly revised. As in previous examples, this material will be changed further during the shooting.

6

Herman Mankiewicz's principal contribution to the *Citizen Kane* script was made in the early stages at Victorville. The Victorville scripts elaborated the plot logic and laid down the overall story contours,

15. The Hays Office letter is reprinted in *Citizen Kane Book*, p. 90.

established the main characters, and provided numerous scenes and lines that would eventually appear in one form or another in the film. The Mankiewicz partisans would have us believe that this is the heart of the matter and that by the end of Victorville the essential part of the scripting was complete.¹⁶ Quite the contrary. It is true that certain *sections* of the script were close to their final form at Victorville. Principally these are the beginning and end, the newsreel, the projection room sequence, the first visit to Susan, and Colorado; that is, the Rosebud gimmickry and the elaborate plot machinery used to get Charles Foster Kane on and off stage—but none of the parts involving the adult Kane people actually knew. At this stage in the scripting Charles Foster Kane is little more than a succession of poses fictionalized from Hearst. Work has scarcely begun on the most glaring problem in the material, making Kane into an authentic dramatic portrait, defining what the Kane phenomenon represents, and indicating how we are supposed to feel about these things. The Victorville scripts contain dozens of pages of dull, plodding material that will eventually be discarded or replaced altogether. And, most tellingly, there is virtually nothing in them of that stylistic wit and fluidity that is the most engaging trait of the film itself.

Major revisions begin as soon as the script passes into Welles' hands, and several important lines of development can be discerned in subsequent phases of the scripting. One of these is the elimination of dramatically questionable material, especially of a large amount of material drawn from Hearst. Another is a fundamental alteration of the nature of many of the scenes; this may be described generally as a shift from scenes played continuously to scenes fragmented according to montage conceptions. Yet another is the evolution of Charles Foster Kane as a character. The principal strategy is the replaying of certain key situations and moments in his life over and over again as a means of testing and discovering the character.

Houseman's wire makes clear who was responsible for the first major set of revisions. That the subsequent installments are also attributable chiefly to Welles is indicated both by the circumstances and by the nature of the revisions. All the familiar signs of Welles' presence are evident in the scripting after Victorville: the stylistic flair that was so lacking in the Victorville scripts, certainly, but also the specific ways he works. Unlike most writers, Welles' customary approach to revision is not to ponder and polish but to discard and replace. He works rapidly and in broad sweeps, eliminating whole chunks and segments at a stroke and, if necessary, replacing them with material of his own devising. If the new material lacks the boldness or sense of dramatic hyperbole he is after—the "Welles touch"—he starts over again discarding and replacing

16. Sara Mankiewicz said this to me in a discussion we had of her husband's work on the scripts. It is one of Pauline Kael's main lines of argument.

and sometimes repeats the whole process several times until he gets what he wants. The evolution of the breakfast table montage is a perfect example. First some of Mankiewicz's rather humdrum scenes involving Kane and Emily are discarded. New scenes are substituted. The overall conception in the early Welles stages is still very conservative and conventional and theatrical: a series of expository scenes between Kane and Emily showing the gradual deterioration of the marriage, leading to an emotionally charged resolution after Kane loses the election. More scenes are discarded, including Welles' own; new ones appear. At last out of trial and error comes the master stroke—a way of playing it using tiny bits and pieces from all the previous scenes but forging them into a brilliantly original combination, the montage at the breakfast table. Other forms of revision in the later scripts are also familiar. On his major productions Welles begins rehearsing with his actors as soon as possible, rehearses extensively, and freely changes the material in rehearsal. He is also adept at handling last-minute scripting emergencies and does the rewrites himself on the spot, often at speeds that astonish even his oldest associates.

Besides being Welles' first film, *Citizen Kane* also marks one of the few times in his career when he was working from an original story idea rather than adapting an existing work. Mankiewicz was hired to furnish him with what any good first writer ought to be able to provide in such a case, a solid, durable story structure on which to build. What Mankiewicz gave him Welles approached as he always approaches "story material," not as blueprint to be approximated or realized but as a source work at the service of an original, independent creation, and he adapted it with the same freedom and disregard for authority he adapts a Shakespeare play or a thriller by Nicholas Blake. His somewhat frenetic scripting habits were unusual by Hollywood standards. They are, in fact, habits one associates with "live" mediums like radio and theatre, where one learns quickly to perform with grace and aplomb under the pressures of deadlines, fate, and all the vagaries of the moment. Nearly a decade of such experience in the Mercury Theatre had endowed Welles with special talents for expeditious solutions and the necessary skills to be, of all major film directors, perhaps the one least dependent on the ordinary services of a screenwriter. In the eight weeks between the time the Victorville material passed into Welles' hands and the final draft was completed, the *Citizen Kane* script was transformed, principally by him, from a solid basis for a story into an authentic plan for a masterpiece. Not even the staunchest defenders of Mankiewicz would deny that Welles was principally responsible for the realization of the film. But in light of the evidence, it may be they will also have to grant him principal responsibility for the realization of the script.